

also about bringing those options to America's children in elementary and secondary schools.

One of the best examples of options is the expansion of school choice. In the expansion of school choice is the growth of charter schools. Over the last 12 years, public charter school enrollment has tripled, and America now has 3 million students attending these schools.

Along with the growing demand for charter schools, homeschooling and private school choice programs are increasing. There are 2.3 million students being homeschooled, and enrollment in private school choice programs has increased more than 100 percent.

Making school choice available to more families should be a priority for all of us. It is clear that parents are looking for options, and we want opportunity for them to be open to everyone.

#### HONORING CRYSTAL WINEBARGER

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to wish Crystal Winebarger of the Fifth District a very peaceful and happy retirement. For the last 16 years, Ms. Winebarger selflessly served as the Hunger and Health Coalition director of operations located in Watauga County, North Carolina. The Hunger and Health Coalition's mission is to lift up the community by providing resources such as food, medications, and heat in the winter to those in need.

Crystal worked with members in the faith community and local churches to ensure the well-being of many individuals and families. It is my belief that North Carolina will benefit from her tireless efforts for years to come.

A lasting legacy of service is something that is becoming all too rare in our neighborhoods today. I will remain forever grateful to Ms. Winebarger for her service to our community. I wish her a happy retirement.

#### RECENT RHETORIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, in bizarre Washington news of the last week, the raging controversy is whether the President of the United States referred to other countries and a continent as s---holes or s---houses. As if either word means a drop of difference, especially when you insult other nations in the world as our President did.

Equally worrisome is that the leadership of this branch of government, the U.S. House of Representatives, a coequal branch of government, has been complicit or silent about how to respond to the comments made by our President. In fact, Speaker PAUL RYAN took 19 hours and 53 minutes to respond.

And with all of that time, enough time to have driven from Washington, D.C., to Dallas, Texas, or to watch the movie "Jaws" nine times, what was his stinging and necessary rebuke after

that much time and thought? "Unfortunate." The Speaker said the President's comments were unfortunate and unhelpful.

Look, it is unfortunate when you walk outside and step in a puddle of water. This was more like walking into a global-sized pile of S.

We are not on the staff of the White House. We are a coequal branch of government, and it is about time we acted like it. Saying nothing, or basically nothing, is unacceptable. We need to put our country before our political party.

Calling other countries, and even a continent, names like s---holes or s---houses puts our servicemembers and our Americans overseas at greater risk. Weak words or silence makes Congress complicit with the President's racist rhetoric.

And, by the way, people outside the beltway just think Congress is full of S. Everyone else had the proper response to the President's comments, that they were pure BS.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

#### HONORING BOB DOLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I rise because today former Senator Bob Dole will receive the Nation's highest civilian honor to recognize his decades of service as a soldier, a lawmaker, and a statesman. House and Senate leaders will present the 94-year-old former Senator with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Senator Dole represented Kansas for 35 years: first as a Representative of this House, and later lending his leadership to the U.S. Senate. In 1996, he was the GOP candidate for President.

President Ronald Reagan, in 1989, said that Senator Dole served America heroically and "has . . . been a friend to veterans, farmers, and Americans from every walk of life. Bob Dole has stood for integrity, straight talk, and achievement throughout his years of distinguished public service."

Senator Dole has served this country, this Nation, on the battlefield, enlisting with the U.S. Army during World War II. During a military offensive in Italy, he was seriously wounded while trying to save a fellow soldier. Despite his grave injuries, Dole recovered and was awarded two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star with an oak cluster for his service, among other medals.

I am proud that we will honor Senator Dole today for his life of service to the United States both in the military and here on Capitol Hill. It is sure to be a moving ceremony in honor of a real American hero.

#### HONORING ARMY SECRETARY MARK ESPER

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, service to one's country

is among the most notable and selfless acts throughout history. Our military men and women have shown uncompromising honor, dedication to duty, and genuine love of country.

This evening, Members of Congress will have an opportunity to meet the 23rd Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Mark T. Esper. Secretary Esper is a 1986 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He served on Active Duty for more than 10 years before transitioning into the Reserve, achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Secretary Esper's service included deployment with the 101st Airborne Division during Operation Desert Storm. For his valor during that operation, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

Proudly, the Secretary is a Pennsylvania native. He graduated from Laurel Highlands High School in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, in 1982. Secretary Esper later earned a master's degree in public administration from Harvard and a doctorate from George Washington University.

I am looking forward to meeting the Secretary tonight thanks to the reception hosted by the House Army Caucus.

In addition to the Secretary, we will be joined by General Mark Milley, the 39th Chief of Staff of the Army. The Army senior leaders and members of the Army staff will also attend.

This reception provides an important opportunity for Members to meet directly with Secretary Esper and General Milley as well as the Army staff to gain their perspectives on the strategic environment facing the Army during the 115th Congress and discuss issues facing our Army, our soldiers, and their families.

Two outstanding events will take place today in the Capitol, and I look forward to both of these historic occasions.

#### CONGRATULATING THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE SHOWMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. I look forward to joining them Friday evening at their annual Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association convention as they celebrate this monumental milestone.

The Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association has served to keep the outdoor amusement industry alive and strong through their combined efforts. The PSSA has grown because its members have learned to put their individual goals aside for the common goals of the industry. This unity really has given them the strength and foresight necessary to continue their work into the next century.

Their annual convention and trade show brings together board members, volunteers, and staff from most of the 109 Pennsylvania county and local fairs.

For 14 years, their supportive scholarships have generated more than \$200,000.